

## **INDIA: Religious Fueled Violence Must Stop**

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Seoul, South Korea - The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) [reiterates the call of civil society in Asia](#) to re-establish the rule of law and freedoms in India. In the wake of the ongoing senseless violence in New Delhi and other states, we condemn the violence and the failure of India's governmental authorities in preventing and de-escalating the situation. Furthermore, as the world's largest democratic state, India has the duty to ensure equality and harmonious coexistence among its citizens. We call on India to work on eradicating messages and state policies which enable the discrimination and isolation of ethnic and religious minorities.

As early as December 2019, India has been experiencing internal turmoil due to a controversial citizenship law, known as the "Citizenship Amendment Act" (CAA), deemed by its critics as violative of the secular nature of Indian democracy. The CAA was backed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with the intent to provide a more lax mechanism and a less stringent requirement scheme to acquire Indian citizenship for religious minorities from the country's Muslim-majority neighbors.

The communal attacks injured more than 250 persons, in addition to the 42 deaths recorded as of February 29. News reports confirmed that the attacks were orchestrated by communal mobs, and that some members of the New Delhi Police Force tacitly and outrightly took the side of the perpetrators. The police force was also accused of using disproportionate force against those protesting the CAA. Furthermore, several journalists and ambulance services were also harmed in numerous instances, with the intent to obstruct the relay of information and medical aid into the clash areas.

"Prime Minister Modi should not let wounds of existing political divisions in India fester. This is not about ethnicity or religion who have coexisted in the region, but rather the unpleasant atmosphere of intolerance brought about by the ruling government's policies. PM Modi's government should work on resolving this situation before it becomes a bigger national tragedy, and affects sentiments in neighboring states. Otherwise, PM Modi will solely shoulder the responsibility for all the harm inflicted on humanity caused by his policy," said Ichal Supriadi, ADN's Secretary-General.

In a genuine democracy, discrimination and the violence resulting from it should not exist. We implore Indian authorities to conduct an investigation into those behind the attacks, as well as the involvement of the New Delhi Police in the violence and the extent of their abuse of power. We also urge the Indian authorities to ensure that the right of the citizens to express and peacefully assemble are guaranteed, that the rule of law is protected, and assure that the orchestrators of this senseless violence are brought to justice. We sincerely hope futile violence of this magnitude will not occur again.

-Asia Democracy Network